

# High-Speed Rail in Buffalo

## Why Do We Need High-Speed Rail?

**According to a recent memo from the Progressive Policy Institute:**

- High-speed rail will create hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs. By some measures, every \$1 billion spent in high-speed rail construction will create 15,000 direct jobs-and tens of thousand more will grow from operating and maintaining the train system. These are jobs that cannot be outsourced.
- High-speed rail makes economic sense. The United States population will increase from 300 million to more than 390 million by mid-century. Those citizens will need transportation, and high-speed rail is cheaper to build and causes much less environmental damage than new highways and airports.
- High-speed rail has a proven record of economic development. With station stops located every 30 or 40 miles between terminals, high-speed rail has spurred growth in rural France and Spain. Fast, efficient transportation could bring similar benefits to economically depressed Main Street.
- High-speed rail is a big step toward energy independence. Present day diesel powered trains use 27 percent less energy per passenger mile than cars and 21 percent less than airplanes, according the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. If high-speed rail corridors were operated with nonpolluting electric locomotives, they could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by as much as six billion pounds annually, according to the Center for Clean Air Policy.
- High-Speed rail is almost infinitely expansible. A double track railway, once in place, can meet heavy traffic needs with no additional capital expenditures except more trainsets. Highways and airports, on the other hand, require more lanes, and runways to accommodate greater traffic loads

The United States Department of Transportation [reported](#) that an investment in public transportation creates almost 20 percent more jobs than the same investment in building roads or highways.

## High-Speed Rail: A Benefit for Buffalo

- **Giving Companies A Reason To Make Buffalo Home:** High-speed passenger rail is an important draw for future businesses. With travel time less than an hour

from point-to-point, a more mobile Western New York workforce expands to almost 1 million workers, the 26<sup>th</sup> largest labor force in the nation. Looking at size and the quality of the local workforce, Buffalo presents one more reason for businesses to choose to do business here.

- **Helping Local Businesses:** Over 200 Buffalo Niagara businesses across a number of industries – most prevalently advanced manufacturing and agribusiness – depend heavily on rail for delivery and shipment of their goods. Also, several Buffalo Niagara businesses directly supply the rail industry, employ over 350 workers and have sales in excess of \$40 million annually. Increasing rail services helps local businesses.
- **Creating Jobs:** Over 200 Buffalo-Niagara businesses depend on rail for delivery and shipment of goods and products. These companies employ over 27,000 workers and have annual sales of over \$7.2 billion. Plus building and maintaining high-speed rail creates jobs. New York State estimates more than 247,000 jobs will be created directly from the building and maintenance of the railroad.
- **Strengthening Our Local Universities:** High-speed rail gives our colleges and universities a powerful recruiting tool -- prospective students across NY will have greater access to their schools. It also provides students the opportunity to easily travel to internships and employment opportunities in other Upstate cities.
- **Increasing Tourism:** An improved rail network makes both Buffalo and Niagara Falls far more accessible to New Yorkers from across the state. With more transportation options, New Yorkers will become more mobile traveling to new parts of the state increasing local tourism. Buffalo's architecture and proud sports tradition and Niagara Falls' natural draw are obvious beneficiaries of increased tourism.
- **Strengthening Trade:** The United States and Canada are already the largest trading partners in the world. The existing rail plan would strength bi-national trade and travel in the Toronto-Hamilton, Buffalo-Niagara international corridor and across the Niagara frontier. Currently the Niagara Frontier carries 16% of all US-Canada trade crossings.
- **Connecting Niagara Falls to High-Speed Rail:** The Buffalo-Niagara Region's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan includes proposed commuter rail service between Buffalo and Niagara Falls and two additional light-rail transit corridors that would integrate with service at the Exchange Street station in Buffalo.

- **Making Niagara Falls a Freight Hub:** As trade strengthens, so too will the movement of freight by rail. Currently CSX operates the track across all of Upstate NY. Their Empire Corridor is their busiest corridor in the nation, currently sharing passenger and freight rail on the same tracks. With a third rail dedicated to passenger travel the movement of freight across NY increases. Niagara Falls is strategically located to be a freight hub for international trade.

**Among high-speed rail's proponents:**

- Mayor Byron Brown, Buffalo
- Mayor Paul Dyster, Niagara Falls
- Andrew Rudnick representing the Buffalo Niagara Partnership
- Tom Kucharski representing the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise

All of whom signed onto the Statement of Region Impact outlaying the economic benefits to their perspective Upstate region. The impact study is available [here](#).